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## RUSSIA AND JAPAN

BY JAMES MAIN DIXON, L. H. D.

During the past few eventful years, the unexpected has come to pass in the relations between the Japanese and Russian empires. Almost to the close of the Meiji era seven years ago, Russia of all foreign powers was regarded by Japan with the most distrust. The long period of Japanese seclusion began at a time when Portugal and Spain, the great maritime powers of the sixteenth century, were united under one ruler, and were a menace to the whole world. They occupied the Spice islands and the Philippines, and had even crept up to Formosa; when the Japanese, who had hitherto traded freely over the waters of the Far East, took fright, and closed their country hermetically to the outer world except for the one port of Nagasaki, where the purely commercial Dutch were allowed to introduce one ship yearly. Before a hundred and fifty years had passed, however, Spain and Portugal had ceased to be a menace to any one. And then a new great power began to show itself on the northern shores of the island empire. The Muscovite was pressing eastward through Siberia, and, by the time of Napoleon, vessels carrying the blue St. Andrew's cross had begun to appear at the ports of the northern island of Yezo. Except for the small lordship of Matsumae at the extreme southwest corner, and some fishing villages on the coast nearby, this island had been neglected, and left to the unprogressive Ainu natives. In the year 1814, members of a Russian crew who landed at Kunajiri, one of the Kuriles close to Yezo, were seized by Japanese officials, and succeeded in escaping only by the shrewdness of one of their number. This was but one of a series of incidents heralding future trouble. Finally a *modus vivendi* was arrived at, when a boundary between the two countries was fixed in Sakhalin, giving Japan the southern half. When diplomatic relations were finally established between the two empires, and Russia had her embassy at Tokyo, the astute Baron Rosen induced the Japanese government to trade off this lower half of Sakhalin for the Kuriles islands—a bargain that was very soon regarded as one-sided.

Japan has always treated this northern island of Yezo as a frontier, in no case to be open to foreign intrusion of any kind, and to be colonized by her veterans. As it happened, however, the destined war with Russia was to break out through trouble in another quarter, the Yalu frontier of Korea, by this time a tributary state of Japan. Meanwhile an unfortunate occurrence had made the relations between the two empires more critical, the attempted assassina-

tion of the then Czarovitch, when on a visit to Japan, by a political fanatic. This occurred in the close of 1891, near the western capital, Kyoto, and so embarrassed the Emperor that he took a journey in person to express his regrets to the wounded prince. Within twelve years the two empires were at war.

The occasion was Russian aggression in Korea, which in its helplessness was sure to fall either to the island power on the east pressing westward, or to the continental power on the west pressing to the open sea. It is wrong to regard Japanese claims over Korea as a modern development. Her great military genius, Hideyoshi, had overrun the peninsula and dared the forces of her Chinese ally. In more recent times, flagrant insults to her representatives in Korea, which at the time had to be borne patiently by the Tokyo government, so incensed the most popular statesman-warrior in Japan, the great Saigo, that he and his clansmen broke out in rebellion. The Satsuma revolt was put down, and Saigo lost his life; but sixteen years later, the Tokyo government, which had bided its time, declared war against China because of trouble in Korea. At its close, the fruits of victory were snatched from her by the interference of Russia, Germany and France, which combined to advise her not to insist on the retention of Port Arthur. Germany somewhat brusquely assumed the lead in this dictation, an attitude that was bitterly resented, and helped to throw Japan into an alliance with Great Britain. She could understand why Russia would object to her occupation of this important stronghold, and why her ally France should acquiesce; but the interference of Germany seemed gratuitous. Here we have the first indication of a possible *rapprochement* with Petrograd, after the inevitable war. It resembled the Kruger telegram which preceded by some years the Boer war. War in each case was destined to come, but after it was over the combatants shook hands and are now friends together, allied against the intrusive third party.

There were other elements which were likely to bring the Russian and Japanese peoples together. The Greek Church has been working for many years in the northern part of the main island and in the capital. Indeed, in the country around Sendai it was—and perhaps is—by no means uncommon to see a Japanese clad in the Russian frock, marking one who had been converted by the labors of the devoted Russian fathers. At their head was Father Nicolai, later archbishop, a remarkable personality, by far the ablest nineteenth century Christian missionary in the Far East. The domed cathedral which he built in the capital was thronged in his time with enthusiastic worshippers. Its position on a hill near the imperial palace and overlooking it, gave some umbrage to sensitive patriots, but the archbishop's personality overcame objections. When, in the days immediately succeeding Commodore Perry's visit and treaty, Nicolai was at Hakodate, learning the language and seeking an entrance into the in-

terior, he had as instructor Joseph H. Neesima, then anxious to leave Japan and discover the secret of western greatness. Neesima came to this country on a trading vessel by way of Shanghai and Manila, and was educated at Amherst and Andover. Returning to his native country, he was instrumental in the founding of the Doshisha University, which under Congregational auspices has grown to be the leading private institution of higher learning in the country. The ablest of the Christian converts, he owed his power in considerable measure to his association with Nicholai. Dying when at his prime half a century ago, he is still remembered with affection by his countrymen here and at home. He forms an interesting bond between religious Russia and our United States.

Twelve years ago the three countries came into close diplomatic relations, at the close of the Russo-Japanese War, when peace was signed at Kittery Bay in New Hampshire between the belligerents, through the good offices of President Roosevelt. It is to be noted that these negotiations, carried to a successful issue, began a period of coolness between this country and Japan. The Japanese envoy, Baron Komura, returned to Tokyo under the stigma of diplomatic defeat, and met a storm of unpopularity. The Japanese people had fully believed that a substantial indemnity, such as had been exacted from China a decade before, would be imposed upon defeated Russia. His fellow-countrymen had nearly beggared themselves in the struggle, and were grievously disappointed when Komura came back empty-handed. Komura and his friends, however, were determined to play a long game. They meant to use Russia as a friend or a tool, as the case might be, for the exploitation of defenseless China. The war had begun over concessions in Korea granted to high Russian officials, which would undoubtedly have led the way to a final appropriation of the peninsula. Why should not Japan play the same game, and exploit China as others—once her own dictators—had shown the way? She had convinced Russia that as an enemy she was altogether too formidable; but as friends and associates they might arrive at a profitable understanding. The war had left no bitter sting behind it. Russian prisoners had been treated with remarkable courtesy and kindness in Japanese prison camps. An act of international courtesy was gracefully performed when the Japanese government raised a monument at Port Arthur to its heroic Russian defenders. A military mission from Petrograd, headed by General Gerngroß, who had fought against the Japanese in Manchuria, and which was accompanied by the Archimandrite Mission from Peking, represented the Czar at the formal dedication.

There occurred also a tragedy at Harbin which offset the ugly attempt on the Czarovitch's life nearly twenty years before. The foremost figure in Japanese councils, the veteran Prince Ito, while the guest of Russia and guarded by a Russian escort, was assassin-

ated by a Korean fanatic. He had come to meet the Russian Minister of Finance, and settle upon a mutually satisfactory policy in Manchuria and elsewhere. Russian officials arrested the assassin, and Kokovtseff accompanied the body of the dead statesman to Chiang-chun, the limits of "Russian" territory. Here the remains were handed over to his countrymen, China being wholly ignored in the matter. It was a striking confirmation of Russian and Japanese railway "zone sovereignty." Thenceforward the two imperial nations were to act together in establishing a grip on China that would mean the death of the Open Door policy to which the United States had pledged herself. Just a year ago a new convention was made with Russia, summarized by the Foreign Office at Tokyo under two heads. The first was an agreement on the part of the Mikado's government that it would not participate in any political arrangement or combination against Russia, which assumed the same obligations; the second, that if the special interests of either were threatened in Far Eastern territory, that it would confer at once for mutual support and coöperation. The Great War has hurried things up to this point; how far the recent revolution at Petrograd will leave Japan isolated still remains a problem.